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Arcata tops Hoopa, faces St. Bernard's today
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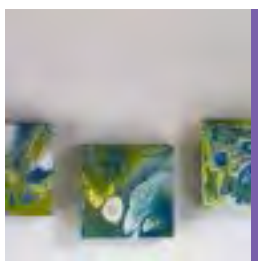

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Winter Olympics

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Times Standard

Serving Eureka and Humboldt County

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Local schools ready in 'whole new reality'

SHAUN WALKER — THE TIMES-STANDARD FILE

Eureka Police Captain Brian Stephens, left, talks about what to do at an active shooter public safety training session in 2016.

Local preparation: Law enforcement, school officials conduct training for staff

By Hunter Cresswell
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Several school shootings — the most recent of which killed 17 people on Valentine's Day when a gunman went on a rampage at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida — have already taken place this year.

With the increasing regularity of the incidents across the nation, the Times-Standard sought to determine how local law enforcement agencies and school officials prepared for such an occurrence.

"It's really unfortunate but we're in a whole new reality with the potential of this happening," Eureka City Schools Superintendent Fred Van Vleck said Thursday.

He said that by sheer coninicidence the ECS Board of Trustees had the topic on its agenda Thursday evening and school lockdown drills had been planned for Thursday.

"We actually cancelled the lockdown drill," he said. "All it would do is stir up those feelings some students are feeling now."

Humboldt County Office of Education communications director Jenny Bowen said each district makes their own plans.

"Districts do have annual crisis response plans their boards approve," she said.

Bowen said staff and faculty have attended the Eureka Police Department's active shooter

PREPARATION » PAGE 5

SHAUN WALKER — THE TIMES-STANDARD FILE

A video talked about using improvised weapons and being committed and aggressive if forced to defend yourself and others during a training session in 2016.

SUSAN STOCKER — SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL

A video monitor shows school shooting suspect Nikolas Cruz, left, making an appearance before Judge Kim Theresa Mollica in Broward County Court, on Thursday in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

> **"It's really unfortunate but we're in a whole new reality with the potential of this happening."**
> *— Eureka City Schools Superintendent Fred Van Vleck*

Florida: Sheriff says school gunman fired into 5 classrooms

By Terry Spencer, Kelli Kennedy and Tamara Lush
The Associated Press

PARKLAND, FLA. » The teenager accused of using a semi-automatic rifle to kill 17 people at a Florida high school confessed to carrying out one of the nation's deadliest school shootings and concealing extra ammunition in his backpack, according to a sheriff's department report released Thursday.

The report from the Broward County Sheriff's Office said Nikolas Cruz told investigators that he shot students in the hallways and on the grounds of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, north of Miami.

Cruz told officers he brought more loaded magazines to the school and kept them hidden in the backpack until he got on campus.

As students began to flee, he said, he decided to discard his AR-15 rifle and a vest he was wearing so he could blend in with the crowd fleeing from the school. Police recovered the rifle and the vest.

After the rampage, the suspect headed to a Wal-Mart and bought a drink at a Subway restaurant before walking to a McDonald's. He was taken into custody about 40 minutes after leaving the McDonald's, Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel said.

A day after the attack, a fuller portrait emerged of the suspect, a loner who had worked at a dollar store, joined the school's ROTC

GUNMAN » PAGE 5

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Child welfare to make changes

State AG outlines mandated reforms to protect at-risk kids

By Dan Squier
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The state Attorney General's office announced Thursday a stipulated judgment against the Humboldt County Child Welfare Services department and the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office.

The judgment comes on the heels of a state investigation into noncompliance on the part of both CWS and the sheriff's office in regard to the state's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act and the state's welfare code.

"The institutions of Humboldt County entrusted to protect children failed them," state Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in the release. "What can be more important than public agencies performing their duties to safeguard the security and welfare of our kids? ... This stipulated judgment will keep the spotlight on Humboldt County's implementation of system-wide reforms that protect children from abuse and neglect."

The investigation by the attorney general's office found county agencies "put children's well-being at risk by failing to coordinate their duties to respond to reports

WELFARE » PAGE 5

COURTS

Shooting suspect may face 3 years

If ruled incompetent, term in state hospital could be minimal

By Dan Squier
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Hugo Parral-Aguirre, the 30-year-old Mexican national who was arrested following a violent altercation with sheriff's deputies in December that left both Parral-Aguirre and a sheriff's deputy with gunshot wounds, could serve as few as three years in a state hospital if he is declared incompetent to stand trial by a second psychiatrist.

In mid-January, Dr. Michael Ramirez of Eureka conducted a competency evaluation of Parral-Aguirre and determined he was incompetent to stand trial.

That led to a request from Deputy District Attorney Josh Rosenfeld to allow the DA to hire Dr. Jessica Ferranti to conduct a second evaluation.

On Tuesday, Humboldt County Superior Court Judge Arvid Johnson granted the request with the caveat that the DA's office foot the bill for the cost of Ferranti's services.

Ferranti is the director of res-

COURTS » PAGE 5

HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Library cuts would have minimal impact locally

Trump's proposed budget would eliminate $156m in funding for the Institute of Museums and Library Services. PAGE A3

COURTS

New trial set for April child sex abuse case

The first trial of Chad Alan Smith ended in a mistrial after an additional investigation found a new witness. PAGE A2

BUSINESS

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Fair organizers seeking bill on race host fees

The proposed legislation would share revenue when horse race schedules overlap in California. PAGE A2

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